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HEGEL ON CLASSIC ART.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND FRENCH EDITION OF CHARLES BÉNARD'S TRANSLATION OF THE SECOND PART OF HEGEL'S *ÆSTHETICS*.]

BY WM. M. BRYANT.

CHAPTER VI. — OF THE IDEAL OF CLASSIC ART.

I. The Classic Ideal.

1. The Ideal as free Creation of the Imagination of the Artist. — 2. The new Gods of Classic Art. — 3. External Character of the Representation.

1. As the Ideal of Classic Art comes to be realized only by the transformation of preceding elements, the first point to develop consists in making manifest that it is truly sprung from the creative activity of the spirit; that it has found its origin in the inmost and most personal thought of the poet and of the artist.

This seems contradicted by the fact that Greek mythology rests upon ancient traditions, and is related to the religious doctrines of the peoples of the Orient. If we admit all these foreign elements — Asiatic, Pelasgic, Dodonian, Indian, Egyptian, Orphic — how can we say that Hesiod and Homer gave to the Greek gods their names and their form? But these two things — tradition and poetic invention — may be very easily reconciled. Tradition furnishes the materials, but it does not bring with it the precise idea and the form which each god is to represent. This idea these great poets drew from their own genius, and they also discovered the actual forms appropriate to it. Thus were they the creators of the mythology which we admire in Greek art. The Greek gods are for this reason neither a poetic invention nor an artificial creation. They have their root in the spirit and the beliefs of the Greek people — in the very foundation of the national religion; these are the absolute forces and powers, whatever is most elevated in the Greek imagination, inspired in the poet by the muse herself.

With this faculty of free creation, the artist, we have already seen, takes a position altogether different from that which he had in the Orient. The Indian poets and sages have, also, for their point of departure the primitive *data*, consisting of the elements of nature—the sky, animals, the rivers—or the abstract conception of Brahma; but their inspiration is the annihilation of personality. Their spirit loses itself in wishing to represent ideas so foreign to their inner nature, while the imagination, in the absence of rule and of measure, incapable of directing itself, allows itself to wander in the midst of conceptions which have neither the character of freedom nor that of beauty. It is like an architect obliged to accommodate himself to an unequal soil, upon which rise old *debris*, walls half destroyed, hillocks and rocks; forced, besides, to subordinate his plans to particular ends. He can erect only irregular structures which must be destitute of harmony, and of which the aspect must be wholly irrational and fantastic. Such is not the work of a free imagination, creating according to its own inspirations.

In Classic Art the artists and poets are also prophets and teachers; but their inspiration is personal.

a. At first that which constitutes the essence of their gods is neither a nature foreign to spirit, nor the conception of a single god who admits of no sensuous representation and remains invisible. They borrow their ideas from the human spirit, from the human heart, from human life. Thus man recognizes himself in these creations; for what he produces outwardly is the most beautiful manifestation of himself.

b. They are on this account only the more truly *poets*. They fashion at their will the matter and the idea so as to draw from them figures free and original. All these heterogeneous or foreign elements they cast into the crucible of their imagination; but they do not form therein a *bizarre* mixture which suggests the cauldron of the magician. Everything that is confused, material, impure, gross, disordered, is consumed in the flame of their genius. Whence springs a pure and beautiful creation wherein the materials of which it has been formed are scarcely perceptible. In this respect their

task consists in despoiling tradition of everything gross, symbolic, ugly, and deformed, and afterward bringing to light the precise idea which they wish to individualize and to represent under an appropriate form. This form is the human form, and it is not employed here as a simple personification of the acts and accidents of life ; it appears as the sole reality which corresponds to the idea. True, the artist also finds his images in the real world ; but he must remove whatever of accidental or inappropriate they present before they can express the spiritual element of human nature, which, siezed in its essence, should represent the everlasting might of the gods. Such is the free, though not arbitrary, manner in which the artist proceeds in the production of his works.

c. As the gods take an active part in human affairs, the task of the poet consists in acknowledging therein their presence and their activity, as well as in signalizing whatever is remarkable in natural events, in human deeds, and in fate—in all which the divine powers appear to be involved. Thus the poet fulfills in part the role of priest, as well as that of prophet. We moderns, with our prosaic reason, explain physical phenomena by universal laws and forces ; human actions, by personal wills. The Greek poets, on the contrary, saw, above all these phenomena, their divine author. In representing human acts as divine acts, they showed the diverse aspects under which the gods reveal their power. Thus a great number of these divine manifestations are only human acts, when such or such divinity intervenes. If we open the poems of Homer, we find there scarcely any important event which may not be explained by the will or the direct influence of the gods. Such interpretations belong to the mode of seeing, to the faith born in the imagination of the poet. Thus, Homer often expresses them in his own name, and places them only in part in the mouth of his personages, whether priests or heroes. Thus, at the beginning of the *Iliad*, he has explained the pestilence by the wrath of Apollo ; further on he will cause it to be predicted by Calchas. It is the same with the recital of the story of the death of Achilles, in the last canto of the *Odyssey*. The shades of the lovers, conducted by Hermes to the mead

ows where blooms the asphodel, there encounter Achilles and other heroes who have battled on the Trojan plain. Agamemnon himself relates to them the death of the young hero: "The Greeks had fought all day; when Jupiter had separated the two armies, they bore the noble body upon vessels and embalmed it, shedding tears. Then they heard coming from the sea a divine sound, and the Achaians, alarmed, would have rushed to their ships had not an old man, in whom years had ripened experience, arrested them." He explained to them the phenomenon, by saying: "It is the mother of the hero who comes from the depth of the ocean, with the immortal goddesses of the sea, to receive the body of her son." At these words fear abandoned the sage Achaians. From that moment, indeed, there was no longer anything in it strange to them. Something human, a mother, the sorrowful mother of the hero, came before them; Achilles is her son, she mingles her moans with theirs. Afterward Agamemnon, turning to Achilles, continues to describe the general grief: "About thee gathered the daughters of old ocean, uttering cries of grief. They spread over thee vestments perfumed with ambrosia. The muses also, the nine sisters, caused to be heard, each in her turn, a beautiful song of mourning; and there was not then an Argive there who could restrain his tears, so greatly had the song of the muses melted all hearts."

2. Still, of what nature are the creations which classic art produces in following such a method? What are the characteristics of the new gods of Greek art?

a. The most general idea that we should form of them is that of a concentrated individuality, which, freed from the multiplicity of accidents, actions, and particular circumstances of human life, is collected upon itself at the focus of its simple unity. Indeed, what we must first remark is their spiritual and, at the same time, immutable and substantial individuality. Far removed from the world of change and illusion, where want and misery reign, far from the agitation and trouble which attach to the pursuit of human interests, retired within themselves, they rest upon their own universality as upon an everlasting foundation where they find repose and

felicity. By this alone the gods appear as imperishable powers, of which the changeless majesty rises above particular existence. Disengaged from all contact with whatever is foreign or external, they manifest themselves uniquely in their immutable and absolute independence.

Yet, above all, these are not simple abstractions — mere spiritual generalities — they are genuine *individuals*. With this claim each appears as an ideal which possesses in itself reality, life; it has, like spirit, a clearly-defined nature, a *character*. Without character there can be no true individuality. In this respect, as we have seen above, the spiritual gods contain, as integrant part of themselves, a definite physical power, with which is established an equally definite moral principle, which assigns to each divinity a limited circle in which his outward activity must be displayed. The attributes, the specific qualities which result therefrom, constitute the distinctive character of each divinity.

Still, in the ideal proper, this definite character must not be limited to the point of exclusive being; it must maintain itself in a just medium, and must return to universality, which is the essence of the divine nature. Thus each god, in so far as he is at once a particular individuality and a general existence, is also, at the same time, both part and whole. He floats in a just medium between pure generality and simple particularity. This is what gives to the true ideal of Classic Art its security and infinite calm, together with a freedom relieved from every obstacle.

b. But, as constituting beauty in Classic Art, the special character of the gods is not purely spiritual; it is disclosed so much the more under an external and corporeal form which addresses itself to the eyes as well as to the spirit. This, we have seen, no longer admits the symbolic element, and should not even pretend to (*affecter*) the Sublime. Classic beauty causes spiritual individuality to enter into the bosom of sensuous reality. It is born of a harmonious fusion of the outward form with the inward principle which animates it. Whence, for this very reason, the physical form, as well as the spiritual principle, must appear enfranchised from all the accidents

which belong to outer existence, from all dependence upon nature, from the miseries inseparable from the finite and transitory world. It must be so purified and ennobled that, between the qualities appropriate to the particular character of the god and the general forms of the human body, there shall be manifest a free accord, a perfect harmony. Every mark of weakness and of dependence has disappeared; all arbitrary particularity which could mar it is canceled or effaced. In its unblemished purity it corresponds to the spiritual principle of which it should be the incarnation.

c. Notwithstanding their particular character the gods preserve also their universal and absolute character. Independence must be revealed, in their representation, under the appearance of calmness and of a changeless serenity. Thus we see, in the figures of the gods, that nobility and that elevation which announces in them that, though clothed in a natural and sensuous form, they have nothing in common with the necessities of finite existence. Absolute existence, if it were pure, freed from all particularity, would conduct to the sublime; but, in the classic ideal, spirit realizes and manifests itself under a sensuous form, which is its perfect image, and whatever of sublimity it has is shown to be grounded in its beauty, and as having passed wholly into itself. This is what renders necessary, for the representation of the gods, the classic expression of grandeur and of beautiful sublimity.

In their beauty they appear, then, elevated above their own corporeal existence; but there is manifest a disagreement between the happy grandeur which resides in their spirituality and their beauty, which is external and corporeal. Spirit appears to be entirely absorbed in the sensuous form, and yet at the same time, aside from this, to be merged (*plongé*) in itself alone; it is, as it were, the moving presence of a deathless god in the midst of mortal men.

Thus, although this contradiction does not appear as a manifest opposition, the harmonious totality conceals in its indivisible unity a principle of *destruction* which is found there already expressed. This is that sigh of sadness in the midst of grandeur which men full of sagacity have felt in the pres-

ence of the images of the ancient gods, notwithstanding their perfect beauty and the charm shed around them. In their calmness and their serenity they cannot permit themselves to indulge in pleasure, in enjoyment, nor in what we especially term satisfaction. The eternal calm must not even extend so far as to admit of a smile nor the pleasing contentment with itself. *Satisfaction*, properly speaking, is the sentiment which is born of the perfect accord of our soul with its present situation. Napoleon, for example, never expressed his satisfaction more profoundly than when he had attained to something with which all the world was dissatisfied; for true satisfaction is nothing else than the inner approbation which the individual gives himself, because of his own acts and personal efforts. Its last degree is that common-place feeling (*bourgeois sentiment*, *Philisterempfindung*) of contentment which every man can experience. Now, this sentiment and this expression cannot be granted to the immortal gods of Classic Art.

It is this character of universality in the Greek gods which people have intended to indicate by characterizing them as cold. Nevertheless, these figures are cold only in relation to the vivacity of modern sentiment; in themselves they have warmth and life. The divine peace which is reflected in the corporeal form comes from the fact that they are separated from the finite; it is born of their indifference to all that is mortal and transitory. It is an adieu without sadness and without effort, but an adieu to the earth and to this perishable world. In these divine existences the greater the degree in which seriousness and freedom are outwardly manifested, the more distinctly are we made to feel the contrast between their grandeur and their corporeal form. These happy divinities deprecate at once both their felicity and their physical existence. We read in their lineaments the destiny which weighs upon their heads, and which, in the measure that its power increases (causing this contradiction between moral grandeur and sensuous reality to become more and more pronounced), draws Classic Art on to its ruin.

3. If we ask what is the outer mode of manifestation suitable to Classic Art, it needs only to repeat what has already

been said : In the Classic ideal, properly speaking, the spiritual individuality of the gods is represented, not in situations where they enter into relation one with another, and which might occasion strifes and conflicts, but in their eternal repose, in their independence, freed as they are from all species of pain and suffering—in a word, in their divine calmness and peace. Their determinate character is not developed so as to excite in them very lively sentiments and violent passions, or to force them to pursue particular interests. Freed from all collision, they are delivered from all embarrassment, exempt from all care. This perfect calm (wherein appears nothing void, cold, inanimate, but which is full of life and sensibility), although unalterable, is for the gods of Classic Art the most appropriate form of representation. If, then, they take part in the attainment of particular ends, the acts in which they engage must not be of a nature to engender collisions. Free from offense on their own part, their felicity must not be troubled by these conflicts. Among the arts it is, therefore, *Sculpture* which more than the others represents the Classic ideal with that absolute independence wherein the divine nature preserves its universality united with the particular character. It is, above all, Ancient Sculpture, of a severer taste, which is strongly attached to this ideal side. Later it was allowed to be applied to the representation of situations and characters of a dramatic vitality. Poetry, which causes the gods to act, draws them into strife and conflicts. Otherwise, the calm of the plastic, when it remains in its true domain, is alone capable of expressing the contrast between the greatness of spirit and its finite existence with that seriousness of sadness to which we have already referred.

II. The Circle of the Gods.

1. Plurality of Gods—2. Absence of Systematic Unity.—3. Fundamental Character of the Circle of Divinities.

1. Plurality of gods, or Pantheism, is absolutely essential to the principle of Classic Art. In this plurality the divine world forms a special circle of divinities, of which each is in

itself a genuine individual, and in nowise an allegorical being. Each god, though possessing a special characteristic, is a complete totality which combines in himself the distinctive qualities of the other divinities. By this means the Greek gods possess a genuine wealth of character. They are neither particular existences nor abstract generalities. They are the one *and* the other ; and, with them, the one is the consequence of the other.

2. Because of this species of individuality, Greek polytheism could not constitute a very real totality, a systematic whole.

The Greek Olympus is composed of a multitude of distinct gods, but which do not form a constituted hierarchy. The orders here are not rigorously fixed. Whence the freedom, the serenity, the independence of these personages.

Without this apparent contradiction these divinities would be embarrassed the one by the other — checked in their development and their power. Instead of being real personages, they would be only allegorical beings, personified abstractions.

3. If we consider more closely the circle of the principal Greek divinities according to their fundamental and simple character, such as sculpture especially represents it, we do indeed find essential differences ; but in particular points these differences are canceled. The rigor of distinctions is tempered by an inconsequence which is the condition of beauty and of individuality. Thus, Jupiter possesses the sovereignty over gods and men, but without on this account placing in jeopardy the free independence of the other gods. He is the supreme god ; nevertheless, his power does not absorb theirs. He has relation with the sky, with lightning and thunder, with the principle of life in nature ; in a special manner, with the power of the State, order established by law. He represents, also, the superiority of knowledge and of spirit. His brothers rule over the sea and over the subterranean world. Apollo appears as the god of science, the preceptor of the muses. Artifice and eloquence, ability in negotiations, etc., are the attributes of Hermes, who is charged, also, with conducting souls to the lower world. Military force is the characteristic of Mars. Vulcan is skilled in mechanic arts. Poetic inspiration, the

exhilarating virtue of wine, scenic games, are attributed to Bacchus. Divinities of the other sex run through a similar circle of ideas. In Juno the conjugal tie is the chief characteristic. Ceres teaches and propagates agriculture; but also the spiritual element of property, of marriage, and of civil rights, with which civilization and moral order begin. Minerva is moderation, prudence, and wisdom; she presides over legislation. The warrior virgin, full of wisdom and reason, is the divine personification of the Athenian genius; the free, original, and profound spirit of the city of Athens. Diana, on the contrary, completely distinguished from the Diana of Ephesus, has, as her essential characteristic, the shy independence of virginal chastity. She loves the chase, and she is in general the maiden, not of a discreet and silent sensibility, but of a serious character, who possesses a lofty soul and lofty thoughts. Venus Aphrodite, with charming Cupid — who, after having been the ancient Titanic Eros, is become a child — represent the mutual attraction of the two sexes, and the passion of love.

Such are the principal ideas which constitute the basis of the spiritual and moral divinities. As regards their sensuous representation, we may still indicate sculpture as the art capable of expressing this particular side of the gods. Indeed, if it expresses individuality by what is most original in it, for the same reason it passes beyond the austere grandeur of the earlier statues, and combines and concentrates a multiplicity and wealth of individual qualities in that unity of the person which we call *character*. It renders this last in all its clearness and simplicity; it fixes in the statues of the gods their most perfect expression. In one respect sculpture is more ideal than poetry; but, on the other hand, it individualizes the character of the gods under the wholly particular human form. Thus it accomplishes the anthropomorphism of the Classic Ideal. As being this perfect representation of the classic ideal in an outward form, adequate to its idea, the images of Greek sculpture are ideal figures in the highest degree. They are eternal and absolute models, the central point of Classic Beauty. And their type must remain the basis

of all other productions of Greek art, where personages enter into movement and manifest themselves in particular acts and circumstances.

III. Of the Individuality Appropriate to each of the Gods.

1. Materials for this Individualization.—2. Preservation of the Moral Character.—
3. Predominance of Harmony and of Grace.

In order to represent the gods in their true individuality it does not suffice to distinguish them by certain special attributes. Besides, Classic Art does not restrict itself to representing these personages as immobile and concentrated within themselves; it also shows them in movement and in action. The character of the gods is then particularized, and presents special traits which compose the physiognomy appropriate to each god. This is the accidental, historic, positive side, which figures in mythology and also in art as an element which is accessory, indeed, but which is also necessary.

1. These materials are furnished by history or by fable. They are the antecedents, the local peculiarities, which give to the gods their living individuality and originality. Some are borrowed from symbolic religions which preserve a trace in the new creations; the symbolic element is absorbed in the new myth. Others are taken from the national origin which attaches to heroic times and to foreign traditions. Still others, finally, proceed from local circumstances relating to the propagation of myths, to their formation, to the usages and ceremonies of worship, etc. All these materials fashioned by art give to the Greek gods the appearance, the interest, and the charm of living humanity. But this traditional side, which originally had a symbolic meaning, has lost it little by little; it was destined only to complete the individuality of the gods; to give them a more human and more sensuous form; to add, by these details, often little worthy of divine majesty, the side of the arbitrary and the accidental. Sculpture, which represents the pure ideal, must, without excluding it altogether, permit its

appearance only in the least possible degree ; it represents it as accessory, in the coiffure, the arms, the ornaments, the external attributes.

2. Another source for the more precise determination of the character of the gods is their intervention in the actions and circumstances of human life. Here the imagination of the poet, as an inexhaustible source, pours forth in a multitude of particular stories, giving account of the characteristics and actions attributed to the gods. The problem of art consists in combining in a natural and lively manner the action of divine personages with human actions, so that the gods appear to be the general cause of what men themselves do and accomplish. The gods are thus the inner principles which reside in the depth of the human soul ; they constitute its own passions, so far as these are elevated, and also its personal thought ; or it is the necessity of the situation, the force of circumstances, of which man suffers the fatal action. This it is which enters into all the situations where Homer causes the gods to intervene, as well as into the method by which they influence events.

3. But upon this side the gods of Classic Art abandon more and more the silent serenity of the ideal in order to descend into the multiplicity of individual situations and actions, and into the conflict of human passions. Classic Art thus finds itself drawn on to the last degree of individualization ; it falls into the agreeable and the graceful. The divine is absorbed into the finite, which addresses itself exclusively to the sensibilities, which are again found there and satisfied at random in the images fashioned by art. The seriousness of the divine character gives place to *grace*, which, instead of impressing man with a holy reverence and elevating him above his individuality, leaves him a tranquil spectator, and pretends to no other aim than that of pleasing him.

This tendency of art to be absorbed in the externality of things, to cause the particular finite element to prevail, marks the point of transition which leads to a new form of art ; for, once the field opens to a multiplicity of finite forms, these place themselves in opposition to the idea, its generality, and

its truth. Then begins to appear the distaste of reason for these representations which no longer correspond to their eternal object.

CHAPTER VII. — DESTRUCTION OF CLASSIC ART.

I. Destiny.

Independently of the outward causes which have occasioned the decadence of art and precipitated its fall, many internal causes, taken in the very nature of the Greek ideal, render this fall inevitable. At first the Greek gods, as we have seen, bear in themselves the germs of destruction, and the imperfection which they conceal is unveiled by the representations of Classic Art itself. The plurality of gods and their diversity make them already accidental existences; this multiplicity cannot satisfy the reason. Thought dissolves them and makes them enter again into a single divinity. Besides, the gods do not remain in their eternal repose; they enter into action — participate in the interests and passions, and mingle in the collisions, of human life. This multitude of relations, whereby they engage as actors in this drama, destroys the divine majesty, contradicts their grandeur, their dignity, their beauty. In the genuine ideal itself, that of sculpture, we remark something inanimate, insensible, cold, a serious air of silent sadness, which indicates that something higher weighs upon their heads; necessity, destiny, supreme unity, blind divinity, immutable fatality, to which are subjected both gods and men.

II. Destruction of the Gods through their Anthropomorphism.

1. Absence of True Personality. — 2. Transition from Classic Art to Christian Art. — 3. Destruction of Classic Art in its own Domain.

I. But the chief cause is that, absolute necessity not forming an integrant part of their personality and being foreign to them, the particular, individual side is no longer held to its dependence, but develops more and more without rule and without

measure. They permit themselves to be drawn into the external accidents of human life, and fall into all the imperfections of anthropomorphism. Whence the ruin of these beautiful divinities of art is inevitable. Moral consciousness turns away from them and reprobates them. The gods, it is true, are moral persons, but under the human and corporeal form. Now, true morality appears only with consciousness, and under a purely spiritual form. The point of view for beauty is neither that of religion nor that of morals. Infinite, invisible spirituality; this is the divine for the religious consciousness. For the moral consciousness the good is an idea, a conception, a duty which commands the sacrifice of the senses. It is in vain, then, to be enraptured with Greek art and beauty, to admire those fine divinities; the soul does not wholly recognize itself in the object of its contemplation or of its worship. What it conceives as the *true ideal* is a spiritual, infinite, absolute, personal God, endowed with moral qualities, with justice, with goodness, etc. This is that of which the gods of Greek polytheism, notwithstanding their beauty, fail to furnish us the image.

2. As to the transition from Greek mythology to a new religion and a new art, it can no longer be effected in the domain of the imagination. At the origin of Greek art the transition appears under the form of a conflict between the old and the new gods, in the very realm of art and of imagination. Here it is upon the more serious ground of *history* that this revolution is accomplished. The new idea does not appear as a revelation of art, nor under the form of the myth or the fable; but in history itself, by the course of events, by the appearance of God Himself upon the earth, where He is born, dies, and is resuscitated. This is a source of ideas which art has not invented, and which it finds outside itself. The gods of Classic Art have existence only in the imagination; they are visible only in stone and in wood; they have never been at once both flesh and spirit. This real existence of God in flesh and in spirit Christianity has for the first time exhibited in the life and acts of a God present among men. This transition, then, could not be accomplished in the domain of art, because the God of

revealed religion is the real and living God. Compared with Him, His competitors (*adversaires*) were only imaginary beings, which could not seriously be placed in opposition to him upon the plain of history. The opposition and the conflict could not then offer the character of a serious strife and be represented as such either by art or by poetry. Hence, whenever it has been attempted among the moderns to make of this subject a poetic theme, it has always been done in a frivolous and impious manner, as in the *War of the Gods*, by Parry.

On the other hand, it is vain to regret, as has often been done in prose and in verse, the Greek ideal and Pagan mythology as being more favorable to art and to poetry than the Christian faith, to which a higher moral truth is accorded, but which is regarded as inferior from the point of view of art and of the beautiful.

Christianity has its art and its poetry in itself; its ideal differs essentially from the Greek ideal and Greek art. Here every parallel is superficial. Polytheism is anthropomorphism. The gods of Greece are beautiful divinities under the human form. So soon as the reason comprehended God as spirit and as infinite being, with this conception there appeared other ideas, other sentiments, other exigencies, which ancient art is incapable of satisfying, to which it could not attain, and which, therefore, called forth a new art, a new poetry. Hence regrets are superfluous and comparison has no meaning; it is nothing more than a mere text for declamation. The serious objections which it has been possible to urge against Christianity are its tendencies to mysticism, to asceticism. These are, indeed, contrary to art, but they are, also, only exaggerations of the Christian principle. But the thought which constitutes the basis of Christianity, the true Christian sentiment, far from being contrary to art, is especially favorable to it. Whence has sprung up a new art, inferior, it is true, on certain sides, to antique art—for example, in sculpture; but which is superior to it on other sides, by all the loftiness of its idea as compared with the Pagan idea.

3. The causes which, in its own domain, have induced this delay may be recognized at a glance in the situations of antique

society, which announce both the ruin of art and that of religion. We recognize the vices of that social order where the State was all, the individual nothing for himself. This was the radical vice of Greek society. In this identification of man and the State the rights of the individual are unknown. Whence he seeks to open up a distinct and independent way, separates himself from the public interest, pursues his own ends, and, finally, works for the overthrow of the State. Whence the egotism which little by little undermines this society, and whence, too, the ever-growing excesses of the demagogue.

Again, there arises in the more exalted souls the necessity of a higher freedom in a State organized upon the basis of justice and right. At length man retreats within himself, and, abandoning the written law, religious and civil, takes his own conscience for the rule of his conduct. Socrates marks the advent of this idea. At Rome, in the last years of the Republic, among the energetic souls, is revealed this antagonism and this disintegration of society. Fine characters offer us the spectacle of private virtues by the side of the enfeeblement and corruption of public customs.

Thus the new principle rises with energy against a world which contradicts it, and undertakes the task of exhibiting it in all its corruption. A new form of art is developed, wherein the conflict is no longer that of the reason in opposition to reality; it is a living picture of society, which, by its excesses, destroys itself with its own hands. Such is the *comic* in the form in which it was treated by Aristophanes among the Greeks, in applying it to the essential interests of the society of his time, without anger, indeed, and with a pleasantry full of gayety and of serenity.

III. Satire.

1. Difference between the Destruction of Classic Art and that of Symbolic Art. —
2. Satire. — 3. The Roman World as a World of Satire.

But this solution, which still admits the possibility of art, we see disappear in the same measure that opposition, pro-

longing itself as such, introduces, instead of poetic harmony, a prosaic relation to the two sides. Whence the classic form of art is destroyed, the ruin of its gods is consummated; the world of the beautiful is ended in history. What is the form of art which, in this transition to a more elevated form, can still find a place and hasten the advent?

1. We have seen symbolic art terminate, also, by the separation of the form from the idea, in a multitude of particular classes, viz., Comparison, Fable, Enigma, etc. Now, if it is true that a similar separation constitutes, from our present point of view, the principle of the destruction of the ideal, we must ask, What is the difference between this mode of transition and the preceding?

a. In the symbolic phase of art, and in that phase which consists in comparison, form and idea are, notwithstanding their affinity, naturally foreign the one to the other. The two principles are in accord, although it is precisely their relations and resemblances which are the basis of their combination or of their comparison. But, since they remain thus separated and foreign at the very center of their union, there cannot be said to be hostility between them when they come to be separated. The tie being feeble, they do not suffer when it is broken. The ideal of Classic Art, on the contrary, has its principle in the perfect identification of idea and form, of spiritual individuality with the corporeal form. Whence, if the two elements which present us so complete a unity are separated, this takes place only because they can no longer be mutually supported; they must renounce this intimate harmony only to pass to an absolute incompatibility, to an irreconcilable enmity.

2. As the character of the relation has changed, so also has that of the elements. In symbolic art there are ideas more or less abstract, general thoughts symbolically represented. Now, in the form which prevailed at this epoch of transition from Classic to Romantic Art, the basis is, indeed, also composed of abstract thought, similar sentiments, rational principles; but it is not those abstract verities in themselves; it is their realization in the individual consciousness, in the personal and

free reason of man, which constitutes one of the terms of opposition. What essentially characterizes this epoch of transition is the manifestation of spirit as penetrated with the sentiment of its freedom and of its independence. It endeavors to represent the efforts which the spirit makes to prevail over an old form, and; in general, over a world no longer suited to it. At the same time, man strips himself of sensuous reality, retires within himself; he seeks inner satisfaction, peace, happiness. But, in isolating himself from society, he condemns himself to an abstract existence, and cannot enjoy the plenitude of his being. Before him is a world which appears to him to be evil and corrupt. In this way art assumes a serious and reflective character. Intrenched in its intolerant wisdom, strong and confident in the verity of its principles, it places itself in violent opposition to the corruption of the time. Now, the knot of this drama presents a prosiac character. An elevated spirit, a soul penetrated with the sentiment of virtue; in view of a world which, far from realizing its ideal, offers it only the spectacle of vice and of folly; rises against it with indignation, rails at it with jest, overwhelms it with the arrows of its scathing irony. The form of art which undertakes to represent this strife is the satire. With the ordinary theories one is greatly perplexed to know in what class it should be placed; it has nothing in common with the epic poems; it does not belong to lyric poetry; nor is it any the more a poetry inspired by the inward pleasure which accompanies the sentiment of free beauty and extends itself beyond. In its grim humor it restricts itself to characterizing with energy the discord which resounds between the real world and the principles of abstract morality. It produces neither true poetry nor a genuine work of art. Thus the satirical form cannot be regarded as a special class of poetry; but, considered in a general manner, it is this form of transition which terminates classic art.

3. Its true domain is not Greece, which is the native land of beauty. Such as we have described it, satire is a gift belonging especially to the Romans. The spirit of the Roman world is the reign of abstract law, the destruction of beauty, the ab-

sence of serenity in customs, the ebbing of domestic and natural affections—in general, the sacrifice of individuality, which devotes itself to the State, and finds its passive dignity, its rational satisfaction, in obedience to law. The principle of this political virtue, in its cold and austere severity, on the outer side, brought all national individualities into subjection; while, within, formal Right was developed with the same rigor and the same exactitude, even to the point of attaining to its perfection. But this principle was contrary to true art; so that we cannot find at Rome any art which presents a character of freedom and of grandeur. The Romans accepted and learned from the Greeks both sculpture and painting, together with epic, lyric, and dramatic poetry. It is to be remarked that what may be deemed unworthy among the Romans are the comic farces, the Fescennines, and the Atellanes. On the contrary, the comedies wrought with art, those of Plautus and of Terence, are of Greek origin. Ennius drew already from Greek sources, and prosaized the mythology. The Romans were able to claim, as properly belonging to them, only the forms of art which, in their principle, are prosaic—for example, the didactic poem, when its object is the enforcement of morality, and when it gives to its general reflections the purely external ornaments of measure, images, comparisons, and of a fine diction and elegant rhetoric. But Satire must be placed before every other. The disgust which the spectacle of the world inspires in virtue—such is the sentiment which seeks to express itself, often in declamations hollow enough.

This form of art, prosaic in itself, can become poetic only when it places before our eyes the image of a corrupt society which destroys itself with its own hand. It is thus that Horace, who, as a lyric poet, exercised himself in the Greek form and according to the Greek method, traces for us in the *Epistles* and *Satires*, where he is most original, a living portrait of the customs of his time, and of all the follies which were before his eyes. We find there a model of fine pleasantry and of good taste, but not in the same degree the genuine poetic gayety which contents itself with rendering ridiculous that which is evil. With others, on the contrary,

the satire is only a parallel, a contrast between vice and virtue. Here discontent, anger, and hatred break forth outwardly, under forms which moral wisdom borrows from eloquence. The indignation of a noble soul rises against corruption and servility. By the side of the vices of the day it traces the image of the ancient customs, of ancient liberty, of the virtues of another age, with no hope of seeing them revive, sometimes without genuine conviction. To the feebleness and mobility of character, to the miseries, to the dangers, to the opprobrium of the present, it can only oppose the stoical indifference and imperturbable firmness of the sage. This discontent gives to history, also, such as the Romans have written it, and to their philosophy as well, a similar tone. Sallust rises against the corruption of manners to which he himself was not a stranger. Titus Livius, with his elegance of rhetoric, seeks consolation for the present in the description of ancient days. But it is, above all, Tacitus who, with a pathos full of dignity and depth, unveils all the perversity of his time in a picture of striking truth.

Later, finally, we see the Greek Lucian, with a lighter spirit and a gayer mood, attack heroes, philosophers, and gods alike, mocking especially at the ancient divinities because of their anthropomorphism. But often, when recounting the action of the gods, he falls into verbosity and becomes tedious, especially for us who are entirely convinced against the religion which he wishes to destroy. On the other hand, we know that from the point of view of beauty, notwithstanding his pleasantries and his sarcasms, the fables which he turns into ridicule preserve their eternal value.

But art could not rest in this disagreement between human consciousness and the real world without departing from its native principle. The spirit must be conceived as the infinite in itself, the Absolute. Now, although it does permit finite reality to subsist in opposition to it as true and independent, it cannot remain in hostility to it. The opposition must give place to a new conciliation, and to the classic ideal must succeed another form of art, of which the characteristic is Infinite Subjectivity, or personality.